

THREE COUNT[©]

Volume 1, Number 41

July 14, 1992

Vader Wins WCW Title

By ALEX MARVEZ
Three Count Editor

Big Van Vader defeated Sting to win the World Championship Wrestling heavyweight title July 12 in the main event of the Great American Bash pay-per-view show emanating from Albany, Ga.

In the co-main event, Steve Williams and Terry Gordy defeated Barry Windham and Dustin Rhodes in the final of the 14-match National Wrestling Alliance tag-team title tournament. A description and analysis of the show:

- For the first time, WCW attempted a mini-angle on its pay-per-view pre-game show in an attempt to increase last-minute buys. Throughout the 30-minute show, WCW announcers Eric Bischoff and Jesse Ventura alluded to an upcoming interview with Sting and Harley Race in the same location. After a recap of the Sting-Vader feud and preview of the tournament, the interview was held. Sting ended up punching Race in the chest, missing his face by a few feet. Race was knocked backward and began screaming at Sting as the interview ended. Pretty bad, but at least it was an attempt. An interview with Rick and Scott Steiner also aired, with the Steiners promising to be at the Bash to get Williams and Gordy. Interviews

with Arn Anderson and Ricky Morton were also held talking about the tournament. Again, a nice touch but poorly executed because Anderson predicted Williams and Gordy would win the tournament. Shouldn't he have selected his fellow members of the Dangerous Alliance,

(Continued on Page 4)



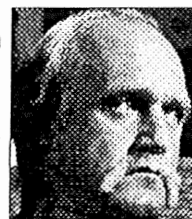
Big Van Vader defeated Sting July 12 to win the WCW heavyweight title at the Great American Bash pay-per-view show. Photo: John Patton.

Hogan Inked For Japan?

By ALEX MARVEZ
Three Count Editor

A Japanese wrestling magazine reported Hulk Hogan has signed to work with New Japan Pro Wrestling, which would mark the former World Wrestling Federation champion's first non-WWF related appearance since 1983.

Weekly Pro Wrestling reports that Hogan is scheduled to debut September 23 in Tokyo. (Continued on Page 2)



Hulk Hogan

WWF Being Investigated

By ALEX MARVEZ
Three Count Editor

NEW YORK CITY -- The World Wrestling Federation is under investigation by the federal government on allegations of sexual abuse of minors and the illegal transportation of minors across state lines.

According to several sources close to the situation, the U.S. Attorney's Office of the Eastern District of New York is targeting its investigation on two former WWF employees -- Mel Phillips, a long-time ring announcer and head of the promotion's ringcrew, and Terry (Continued on Page 2)

Inside...

Briefly -- Pg 3
WBF Mag folds -- Pg 3
Flair, NWA settle -- Pg 5
Beverly int. -- Pg 6-8
Rey's Lucha -- Pg 9

WWF Under Federal Investigation in NY

(Continued from Page 1)

Garvin, a match-making assistant.

The WWF suspended Phillips and accepted the resignation of Garvin last February amidst charges of sexual abuse by **Chris Loss** and **Tom Cole**, two ring-crew members. Cole, a 21-year-old who claimed sexual abuse by Phillips occurred during his tenure from 1983-90, received \$70,000 and re-instatement on the WWF's ring crew last March in a settlement with the promotion. Loss did not pursue a lawsuit, and no longer works for the WWF.

Mary Jo White, the chief U.S. assistant attorney of Eastern New York, could not confirm the investigation was being conducted. WWF attorney **Jerry McDevitt** said, "I've been advised by the appropriate authorities that Titan Sports is not a subject or target of the investigation, nor are any of its officers or principles."

Cole and at least three other former ring-crew members were interviewed by the attorney's office within the past three weeks, sources said. A 15-year-old from Brooklyn who said Phillips molested him at a WWF show in Long Island in 1991 will likely speak with the attorney's office later this week.

The 15-year-old, **Lee Cole** (the older brother of Tom Cole) and **Cheryl Vasquez** were guests July 12 on **Ric Carter's** and **Bill Kunkel's** *Wrestle Talk* radio show. Vasquez, 45, led a demonstration about the sex scandals outside a WWF show in Poughkeepsie, NY, two weeks ago. The 15-year-old also described the situation with Phillips, claims of a WWF investigation and his alleged meeting with Vince McMahon prior to the *Donahue* show on wrestling March 16.

Transcripts of the 15-year-old's and Vasquez's appearances will appear in next week's **Three Count**.

THREE COUNT®

Alex Marvez. Editor/Publisher
Carlos Rey. Lucha Libre
John Muse. Japan

Three Count is a weekly professional wrestling newsletter published every Wednesday. Price for subscription is \$6 for one month, \$18 for three months, \$33 for six months and \$66 for one year. Please address all subscription checks to Three Count at 8850 S.W. 19th Street, Miami, FL 33165.

Sheet Spotlight

Here's a look at the top stories of some of the other wrestling newsletters, with subscription information:

• **Dave Meltzer's Wrestling Observer Newsletter** (July 13): Details of **Bob Backlund's** return to the WWF; A live report from the AAA show held July 4 in Los Angeles; More comparison of last year's wrestling product to this year's; Japanese TV analysis and regional reports. *Weekly*; \$1.50 an issue. P.O. Box 1228, Campbell CA 95009-1228.

• **Wade Keller's Pro Wrestling Torch** (July 9): Interview with NAWA promoter **Tony Mara**; Debut of **Mark Madden's** photo (complete with boa) and complimentary copies of *The Ring Post*, a monthly supplement featuring guest columns from *Torch* readers and Keller. Cost is \$.75. *Weekly*; \$1.25 an issue. P.O. Box 201844, Minneapolis, MN 55420.

• **Georgiann Makropolous' Wrestling Chatterbox** (June 1992): Opinion-oriented issue featuring more of Georgiann's column writing skills; Reprint of **Mike Mooneyham** column from the *Charleston Post-Courier* on **Jesse Ventura**; Two **Regina Greene** lists -- of tag-teams she would like to see again, and matches she wouldn't. *Monthly*; \$2.50 an issue. 23-44 30th Drive, Astoria, NY 11102-3252.

Hogan Japan-Bound?

(Continued from Page 1)

However, wrestling insiders are skeptical of the starting date because a major match with an "American outsider" is already booked (**Tatsumi Fujinami** vs. boxer **Marvis Frazier**).

Rumors of Hogan's negotiations with NJPW began last February, as Hogan's image in the U.S. was tarnished by allegations of anabolic steroid and drug use by former WWF wrestlers. Hogan was also planning to not wrestle this summer, as he is filming a movie entitled *Rough Stuff* in Miami.

The Wrestling Observer Newsletter reported, though, that **Brian Blair** (Hogan's friend who wrestled in Japan as **The Killer Bee**) went on a tour for NJPW to finalize negotiations for a Hogan signing. Hogan was originally slated to sign a \$1.2 million contract for six dates a year over a two-year period. No word on whether that figure remains the same.

The effects of Hogan signing with NJPW would probably be minimal for this country. It is highly unlikely Hogan would ever work with a wrestler from World Championship Wrestling because of his continued ties with the WWF. With the WWF's partner in Japanese promotion, Super World Sports, in a state of turmoil, Hogan appearing for NJPW would not likely affect the SWS for the short haul. In the long-term, though, the SWS would lose a minor drawing card in an already thin talent roster.

Briefly...

- The World Bodybuilding Federation announced Wednesday afternoon that it was suspending the publication and distribution of its *WBF Magazine* following its September issue. In a letter written by WBF marketing director **Jonathan Flora**, the WBF is looking to develop a "more cooperative relationship with others within the bodybuilding industry." That includes giving rival body-building groups permission to use photographs or arrange interviews with WBF stars. The move is the equivalent of the World Wrestling Federation, the group's sister company, allowing WCW Magazine to write stories about its performers. No word yet on whether the WBF's *Body Stars* show telecast on the USA Network is in trouble as well. The news comes amid news the WWF is under federal investigation (see Page 1 story)

- The tournaments for the National Wrestling Alliance heavyweight tournament are in place. Added to the tournament are **Jim Neidhart** (who is not wrestling yet for WCW), **The Barbarian** and **Terry Taylor**. Removed from the tournament are **Sting**, **Big Van Vader**, **Ron Simmons** and **David Taylor** from England. Simmons was removed so he wouldn't have to do a job in the tournament (as he obviously is being groomed for the WCW title), while Sting and Vader are feuding in the U.S. for WCW while some of their co-workers compete in the tournament. **Paul E. Dangerously** was replaced by Madusa as manager of the Dangerous Alliance members for the tournament. First-round pairings: **Rick Rude vs. The Super Strong Machine**; **Shinya Hashimoto vs. Barbarian**; **Neidhart vs. Kensuke Sasaki**; **Steve Austin vs. Arn Anderson**; Taylor vs. **Hiroshi Hase**; **Barry Windham vs. The Great Muta**; **Masa Chono vs. Tony Halme**; **Scott Norton vs. Bam Bam Bigalow**.

- Taylor was given notice his contract would not be renewed by WCW, but negotiations are continuing with executive vice president **Bill Watts**. Taylor would have to agree to a night-to-night pay-off schedule to return.

- **Ricky Morton** has already left WCW as part of a six-month hiatus before his return. Morton captured the USWA title from **Eddie Gilbert** July 13 in Memphis.

- **Chris Love** is rumored as possibly entering WCW as a heel manager.

- Heavyweight boxer **Tommy Morrison** will fight **Yoshiaki Fujiwara** October 4 for the Pro Wrestling Fujiwara shoot-fighting group, according to the *Wrestling Observer Newsletter*. On the undercard, **Masaharu Funaki** faces **Don Neilson Nakaya**, a karate expert who is a fantastic worker in mixed matches.

- Line-ups for upcoming WCW cards for Florida:

August 13 in Sarasota: **Sting vs. Vader**, **Simmons vs. Super Invader**, **Nikita Koloff vs. Cactus Jack**, **Dustin Rhodes vs. Scotty Flamingo**, **The Freebirds vs. Dick Slater-Barbarian**, **Brad Armstrong vs. Danny Spivey**, **Big Josh vs. Greg Valentine**, **Tom Zenk vs. Bob Cook**.

Aug. 14 in Fort Myers: **Sting-Simmons vs. Vader-Invader**; **Koloff vs. Jack**, **Spivey vs. Rhodes**, **Flamingo vs. Armstrong**, **Freebirds vs. Slater-Barbarian**, **Josh vs. Cook**.

Aug. 15 in Jacksonville: **Sting vs. Vader**, **Koloff vs. Rude**, **Armstrong vs. Flamingo**, **Austin vs. Steamboat**, **Simmons vs. Invader**, **Rhodes-Windham vs. Slater-Valentine**, **Zenk vs. Spivey**, **Josh vs. Barbarian**.

Beverly Interview

(Continued from Page 8)

when I suggested a number of real problems hardcore fans have. One is they don't know where to draw the line as to where life begins and wrestling ends. It becomes such a compulsion and obsession that they tune out other parts of real life. I've read letters from people who are friends of mine in **Ron Lemieux's** bulletin (*Arena Report*) earlier this year whose marriages had failed or had some question marks like, "Well, can I give up wrestling for my wife if she puts the squeeze on me." People have to make the choice in life that this is not the only thing in life worth living for. If it is, you're missing half of your life. TV can be an obsession. Kids can watch too much M-TV. You can do anything to excess. I made the decision myself to get away from (producing a newsletter) because the time was right. I had done what I wanted to do. Coupled with the difficulties in my personal job and scares to my health, I made the decision to get out of the weekly business. It can easily be said I got out at the time the scandals were just beginning to break. That's probably true. But I have kind of enjoyed watching this thing without actively having to be a part of it. I've seen wrestling do this to itself. None of this terribly surprises me. I heard rumors about this four-to-five years ago, but I didn't have precise enough information to get this out. People were telling me for our years about some of this stuff, and I knew it was a matter of time before something exploded.

Where do we go from here? I don't know. I think the next round is going to be in the courts. I made the choice to leave because it was the right time in my life. I made time for my wife, and I never usually had time to do some things because I was so glued to the newsletter. Starting one is not a particularly good idea for someone who is married, because you still have a commitment to another person. Rebecca (Steve's wife) helped me get it out week after week, and we were not able to do the things she wanted to.

Vader Captures WCW Title at Bash

(Continued from Page 1)

Rick Rude and Steve Austin? Morton appears to be a babyface again, although rumor has it he and Robert Gibson will reform the Rock -n- Roll Express in August in Smokey Mountain Wrestling.

The show was hosted by Tony Schiavone (who appears to have lost weight) and Terry Allen,

with Jim Ross and Ventura on play-by-play. WCW then announced Akira Nogami, who was to team with Hiroshi Hase in the tournament, had sustained an eye injury and would be replaced by Shinya Hashimoto. Cudos to WCW for airing a video showing Nogami at an optometrist getting his eyes examined to give the injury legitimacy. Unfortunately, WCW's handling of the injury prior to the show was poor. Ross announced on WCW's *Power Hour* July 11 that a participant in the tournament was injured and would not be participating. But instead of announcing who was injured, Ross told fans to call the promotions 900-number for more information. Why should fans have to pay money to find out information on a show they are buying, let alone a bad attitude toward correcting its advertising. Bishoff conducted a locker room interview with WCW executive vice president Bill Watts, who explained that the NWA tournament would be conducted under that group's rules (i.e. top-rope moves were allowed).

1) Ricky Steamboat-Nikita Koloff defeated Brian Pillman-Jushin Lyger when Steamboat reversed a Pillman cross body-block off the top rope. This was not a smooth match, which is largely the fault of Koloff. However, it was still the second best match of the card. Earlier in the day, I was a guest on Ric Carter's and Bill Kunkel's *Wrestle Talk* radio show in Las Vegas. Kunkel asked me what I thought of WCW's new rules. I said I could understand the top rope rule in the sense that guys shouldn't be using the moonsault as a transition

hold. Well, sure enough, Lyger did just that in one sequence with Steamboat. Early in the match, Lyger got two-counts with a moonsault, tombstone piledriver and the Eduardo Carpentier-style front flip onto Steamboat. That was all the flying Lyger did during this match. Grade: C+.



Shinya Hashimoto replaced Akira Nogami in the NWA tag-team tournament. Photo: Dr. Mike Lano.

2) Hase-Hashimoto defeated The Freebirds when Hase pinned Jimmy Garvin with a Northern Lights suplex (exactly what was predicted in Issue 40 of *Three Count*). This match marked the television return of referee Nick Patrick, who had been injured last March in an automobile accident and is still required to wear a hand brace. Hashimoto's normally brutal kicks were at about 25 percent strength. Hashimoto is about 30 pounds overweight, and, as *Three Count* Japanese columnist John Muse said, bears a striking resemblance to John Belushi's samurai

character from the old *Saturday Night Live*. I also don't think no one had the guts to try and treat him like the Steiners did Takayuki Iizuka at *Wrestle War*. Grade: D.

• Watts made his second appearance, this time with Schiavone and Hiro Matsuda to reintroduce the NWA heavyweight title and announce plans for a title tournament August 8-10 in Tokyo. Yes, Ric Flair's old title is finally back in WCW (See story on Page 5). In fact, Flair was mentioned twice by Watts during the interview, drawing a surprising pop from the audience. Watts held the little piece of metal with Flair's name engraved on it and said the plate would be replaced with the name of the new champion. This interview is likely to spur plenty of rumors of a Flair jump, talk which was already circulating through WWF locker rooms the week prior to the show. I don't think a Flair jump is likely, but Watts sure didn't try to bury

Flair like I thought he would. Watts said a unification match between the NWA and WCW champion would occur in the future, which is probably at the Starrcade pay-per-view show.

3) Rhodes-Windham defeated Rick Rude-Steve Austin when Rhodes pinned Austin after a clothesline off the top rope. This match was very disappointing. Paul E. Dangerously was "barred from ringside for this match" (i.e. getting buried by Watts), and did not appear on the show. Instead, Madusa managed the heel duo. She looks good, but replacing Paul with Madusa is like replacing a roysce with a hood ornament (albeit a good-looking hoodornament). This match had no heat and was just like every other tag-team match on the show -- out-of-synch, lacking flow and featuring loads of front facelocks. The finish was hilarious from a kay fabe standpoint. Austin was attempting to piledrive Windham as Rhodes climbed to the top rope. The screen was then split into two before Rhodes jumped, offering two different angles on the finish. How did the camera crew know to split the screen? Grade: C.

4) Williams-Gordy defeated Steamboat-Koloff when Williams pinned Steamboat with an Oklahoma stampede that looked more like an Oklahoma spine-buster. This featured a lot of matwork, which would have been really over to wrestling audiences in 1972. Twenty years later, the style puts fans to sleep. Steamboat was about to attempt a cross body-block on Williams from the top rope, but was kept from jumping by Gordy. By the time Steamboat jumped, Williams was on his feet and caught him in a bearhug position. Grade: C-.

5) Windham-Rhodes defeated Hase-Hashimoto when Windham pinned Hase following an awful lariat. The highlight of this match was Hase missing a bombs away from the top rope. The matwork remained slow and methodical. Grade: D.

6) Vader defeated Sting in the best match on the show. Sting's fate is a case of reaping the seeds you sow. Remember when Sting was given the WCW the first three times and how unenthusiastic he was? How he didn't act like a champion, nor was there an aura around him? Well, when Watts came in, I think the Stinger realized he was about to be replaced as champion. Since then, his work rate has zoomed. Sting also looked in fantastic shape for this match, as he was much lighter and did not have a steroid-type looking physique. But it was too late to salvage his title reign. Before the match, WCW's future champion -- Ron Simmons -- was interviewed by Schiavone and Allen. He was also shown sitting with Schiavone during the match talking about what was going on in the ring. Ross and

Flair Returns NWA Title; WWF Settlement Likely

Ric Flair and the National Wrestling Alliance have finally settled a 10-month lawsuit concerning the old NWA title belt.

Flair, who debuted in the World Wrestling Federation last August with the belt, received a settlement of approximately \$28,000 for returning it. The belt was displayed July 12 by World Championship Wrestling on its Great American Bash pay-per-view show, and a new NWA champion will be crowned after a tournament August 8-10 at Tokyo's Sumo Hall.

Flair originally demanded \$52,000 for the return of the belt, of which he had given \$25,000 as a deposit. An NWA source said that Flair's deposit was documented, but the money could not be found in NWA documents. WCW is likely to foot the cost of the settlement.

Within the next week, WCW is likely to settle its lawsuit against the WWF for showing Flair's title belt on television. WCW had received a restraining order from a North Carolina district judge last October barring the WWF from showing the NWA title on television. The WWF turned the ruling into an angle, censoring Flair's title on television as a "ruling made by WWF president Jack Tunney." WCW is expected to receive between \$35,000-\$40,000 in the settlement, with the WWF likely to consent to not showing Flair with the belt on future telecasts or commercial video tapes.

Ventura also harped on body-building during this bout. Vader didn't sell for the first few minutes until a series of hot moves by The Stinger evened things. Vader took the advantage soon after, and maintained it for about seven minutes until a Sting comeback. The Stinger began with a forward rolling kick (a new move) and a DDT. Then, with Vader spread across the top turnbuckle, Sting picked him up and delivered a dramatic Samoan drop. Sting attempted a German suplex, but was elbowed by Vader, who attempted a belly-to-back suplex. As Sting flipped over Vader to block the move, his legs knocked referee Pee Wee Anderson down momentarily. Sting then connected with an impressive German suplex, but the referee was slow getting into position, and Vader kicked out at the count of two. Sting then delivered a Stinger splash in the corner and pushed a stumbling Vader face first into the opposite turnbuckle. Sting delivered another splash but "hit his head" on the metal bar connecting the ring post and turnbuckle. Sting was "out cold" and juiced (intentionally). Sting kicked out of one Vader pin attempt, but was pinned after a power bomb. The audience was stunned. I had a feeling, as documented in Issue 40, that Vader was getting the

(Continued on Page 12)

Spotlight on: Steve Beverly

*With television ratings for both the World Wrestling Federation and World Championship Wrestling at an all-time low, who better to ask for an analysis of the situation than **Steve Beverly**? The former Matwatch editor is the wrestling industry's leader in analyzing television products and trends. It's also good to check up on a good friend to many of us who decided last January to discontinue publishing his wrestling newsletter -- the second-largest in the world of its kind behind the Wrestling Observer Newsletter -- what he has done with his spare time. In the second leg of a two-part interview, Beverly talks about who the next superstar in WCW should be, **Jim Cornette's** Smokey Mountain Wrestling, his thoughts on **Missy Hyatt** and **Bill Watts**, and his status on WCW's 900-number service.*

AM: I wanted to know your opinion to the *Wrestling Observer Newsletter* poll. If you had to select one babyface for WCW to build around, who would it be?

SB: (Pause) If I say **Sting**, the way he is now, people will say he's had two shots and he hasn't rung a bell. They probably have a point. I don't think it all is **Steve Borden's** fault. I think the first time through he was terribly marketed and the second time through he just didn't matter. I think I'll answer the question this way -- it doesn't matter, because I don't think anybody is there. People can argue **Barry Windham** is one who can, and I would say they were probably write if this was between 1986-1988 and they decided to strike out with this young man earlier than they intended to. Maybe he could have established himself as a guy who could do it. But I don't think Barry can turn it around, although he is a fantastic wrestler. I don't know if one is there. If you're going to make a change, you want to do something for the better. I don't think that is there. You may disagree with me, but I think the most entertaining matches and dynamic confrontations they have are in the light heavyweight division. It is the one that can get the crowd up, and I wish they could try to make the thing work by doing more of it instead of less. I don't know if you can build a single person around it, but it is different enough so that it could possibly bridge that gap in the age demographics.

I'm not trying to dodge the question. I don't know if there is anybody out there you could say who could do it. I'm not going to try to talk to **Terry Bollea** and give a ghastly amount of money and build around him. It would pump things up, but it's not the cure-all answer. I do not see the performer out there. If you're going for a name that still has the magic and charisma to do it, go for **Hulk Hogan** and try to build something around him. But you have to do something different than how it was in 1984. He has to be built more along the lines of a legend. I don't think the answer is bringing back **Ric Flair** and doing it all over with him. He wasn't ringing in the turnstiles in the latter part of his tenure there. I think he would be a great addition to have back, but it's not the answer. It would be taking a step back to what it was, and that's part of the problem. WCW tried to hang on with him too long, and things didn't change and they didn't have a specific focus on what they were going to stick with. Who knows, though. If I had that answer, I would be bringing in a big

salary.

I really thought that back in 1988 after the first Clash of Champions, they were onto something with their first Flair-Sting match. Sting was a guy with a rising curve, and the company waited way, way, way too long to go with him. I know wrestling politics about paying your dues, but they were onto something and they should have struck with that something while it was hot. They should have gone with him that year. I don't say that would be a miracle cure, but at the time **Ted Turner** bought the company, his champion would have been on a rising curve and it could have been a great situation for them.

AM: I said **Ricky Steamboat** or **Bam Bam Bigelow** -- if the latter was used properly -- could work. How do you feel about Bigelow?

SB: I'm not sure if you can do that with him, because I'm not sure he has that kind of monster capability. It might work. I don't know. Heaven knows they have tried everything else. They really have. Heaven forbid, some of the most notable names in entire industry in the past 15 years have come in during the last 3 1/2 years and tried to put a spin on WCW and haven't. With one exception -- **Ric Flair**. I was hard on him during his era of booking, because I didn't like some of the things he had done and his attempt to go back to some of the past. But the most successful television ratings in WCW history came during Flair's era as booker.

AM: Here's a name as a champion for you -- **The Great Muta**.

SB: Here we go. I am probably dead wrong about this, but I say why not? You want to build somebody different who is a real popular hero with kids. You may not be able to get him on a regular enough basis, but again, why not Muta?

AM: About the only detriment I could find would be his interviews.

SB: That may be troublesome, but you've got guys now trying to sell interviews week after week and it isn't working. The answer isn't **Gary Hart**, but I don't know what the answer is. This guy (Muta) was being played up as a heel at those initial days at Center Stage when he was first being made into a significant performer for the company. I remember African-Americans holding up Muta posters and going crazy for this guy. The poor

jobbers ... I felt terrible for them, because they're supposed to be the babyfaces and the crowd was going crazy for him. He has the appeal to kids just from his way of ring-style. I think it crosses the barrier with adults from that standpoint. Maybe he can't do an interview, but heaven forbid, he can sell himself as a performer. He is one of the few who could do that without having to do an interview. Sting is criticized for his interview style, because he can never go out and speak cohesively except for the time he does his beach boy yelling and screaming.

AM: I always thought you could put Muta with a Japanese-American manager like **Pat Morita** from *The Karate Kid*.

SB: They would have to be patient enough to make that work, and it's a situation where somebody has to have a lot of guts to say people want to look at this on television. They should look on it as a whom you map out what you want to do with him over a two-year period. They would want to build him into someone who speaks English, but more than anything else, they should showcase his phenomenal ring-style. That non-stop -- and I hate to use the pun -- flair and savvy, that very telegenic feeling that no matter what he does, he's going to be cheered. It certainly didn't help the guy to have him get beat by **Lex Luger** in three minutes on a Clash, yet he has been out of the picture for so long that as far as American viewers go, they've probably forgotten it.

AM: That's so funny. I don't even remember much of the match except the finish, and wouldn't have remembered had you not brought it up. Here's one -- why not **Jushin Lyger**?

SB: I don't know. Why not? I think in the long haul, though, Muta has more of a history of going against some of the bigger guys, even though he really is a light heavyweight. His status against heavyweights can be documented, because there's plenty of tape on that. Lyger is one I would continue to showcase in the light heavyweight division and tag-team situations. I would do that for two or three years and then see, if there is a WCW around in two or three years.

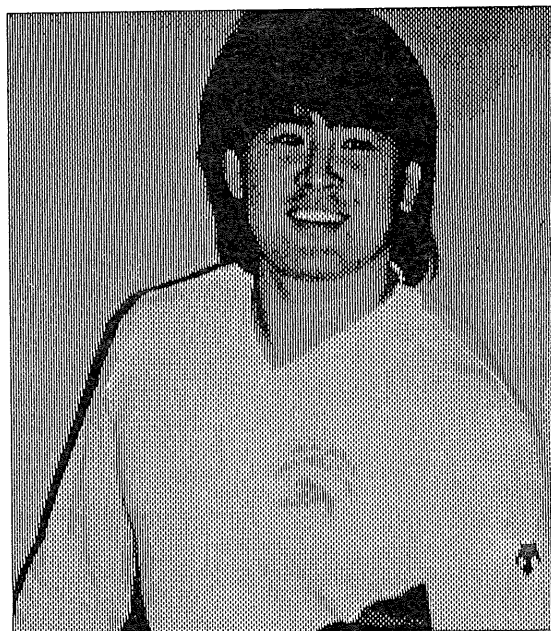
AM: What do you feel is the best American promotion today? Is it **Jim Cornette's** Smokey Mountain Wrestling?

SB: I'm going to judge that question by what I like to see in a promotion, and I say it's Smokey Mountain Wrestling. It's creative, fast-paced and does not sacrifice a wrestler's character, but still emphasizes a story. It's a soap opera, yet it's not too cartoonish. I can sit and watch it and enjoy the performers in the ring, and laugh where I'm supposed to laugh and have fun with it. I wonder whether the show would have commercial appeal for the whole U.S. or just the regional U.S. I don't know. My instincts tell me it isn't just appealing as a regional group simply because Jim is, in my mind, one of the three-to-five most creative people the industry has had in the past five years. Nobody any more than I would hope that organization can blossom, because it is fun to watch. I think it is a lot like the Continental organization was in 1988 when it was on the verge of doing something in the Southeast. I think that where Jim does not use exactly the same style as **Eddie Gilbert**, he employs a lot of techniques that can really get a quite a few people to commit to watching. The problem is getting them committed. Heaven hopes they're still there. But that group is the best.

AM: What's your funniest Jim Cornette moment?

SB: I have two of them -- one personal and one on the air. The personal situation was back in February 1989. Jim was really embroiled in an early dispute with **George Scott**. This was at the time he and **The Midnight Express** had gone babyface. Immediately, George Scott thought this idea would not do or be successful. In Columbus, Ga., was Scott's first syndicated taping, and it was a dud show. He was pairing up people who had never teamed together before. **Michael Hayes** and **Ivan Koloff**. **Eddie Gilbert** and **Vincent Young**. It was a weird, weird taping. The first thing Cornette said as he walked out of the dressing room door was, "If George had his way, **Bobby Eaton** would be teaming with **Tommy Rich** and **Stan Lane** would team with **Dick Slater**." Cornette went out and got the biggest pop of the night. He walked back to the dressing room, gave me a high five and said, "These babyface managers just can't get over, can they?" And there's George watching him.

The funniest thing on TV ... I will never forget the expression on his face the day the NWA was in the old TBS



Why is The Great Muta (Keiji Muto) smiling? Because Steve Beverly believes he would be a great WCW champion. Photo: Dr. Mike Lano.

studio and they had the match with The Midnight Express against **The James Boys**, who were **Dusty Rhodes** and **Magnum T.A.** under masks. They had **Baby Doll** as their manager, and when Baby Doll grabbed hold of Dusty's bullwhip at the finish, Jim's eyes were bigger than Ricky Ricardo's. I've never seen him move so fast out of the arena. I wish Jim could have -- and I'm not sure it is ever going to happen -- the opportunity to genuinely prove what he could have done as the creative guy in charge of WCW or the old NWA. I wish he would have had the chance to run the show, because one thing is for sure -- it would have been entertaining. I think he would have emphasized character and storyline without sacrificing the integrity of pro wrestling. God, I wish his show gets some more exposure.

AM: How does he do that? Through the ESPN slot?

SB: Having that slot certainly doesn't help house show business. There hasn't been a promoter yet who has been helped by that slot, and we've had four of them try.

AM: What is your status with the WCW 900-number? Is there a chance you'll be back on the line?

SB: I've been there all along, so I've never come off the air. To be frank with you, they could ask me to get off at any given time and could run me at any time they like. (Former WCW executive vice president) **Kip Frey** wanted me off the line, particularly from the influence of some one within the company, some one in particular who thought I wrote badly about her in my yearbook. Frankly, I expected to be off of it, but when Frey was removed, the whole picture was changed and they asked me to stay. I've never missed a week. The situation is like anything in this business. You expect nothing is ever going to be permanent. There were just some very strong feelings between me and that person, and **Missy Hyatt** was flatly upset by what I wrote about her. It was true, but she didn't like the fact it was written. She was pushing heavily for my removal.

AM: What is it that you wrote?

SB: She did not like the fact I printed transcripts of phone messages made separately by her and **Jason Hervey** on my answering machine after the story first began to break in Atlanta on the Associated Press wire that these two were engaged. In *Matwatch*, I simply wrote what was reported by those various outlets, and even the former WCW public relations director **Barry Norman** confirmed it to all of us. I got separate phone messages from her and Jason exonerating me for writing it, even though it was in every publication around. Jason made this hilarious threat that he would get two high-level ABC executives to contact my TV station and get me fired from my job. Then at one point, he made the comment that I was never to write about him in my newsletter because he wasn't a wrestler, he wasn't "a steroid freak."

I wrote that in the newsletter, and I know there are plenty of wrestlers who hate to be called steroid freaks.

I tried to be friends with Missy. She had sent me a hand-written letter a while back asking why I "didn't like her" and why I wasn't "fair to her." She was still married to Eddie at the time. She came by and greeted me friendly when we first met in Columbus. I told her I was not an enemy and to give me a chance, that I was not out to get her or be a problem. I don't agree with a lot of the ways her character is used. I think it sets back the cause of equality for women, extra-ordinarily so. But it didn't really matter as far as that was concerned. I had a conversation for an hour with Eddie in the adjoining room. But Missy doesn't like anybody who doesn't think anything she does is the greatest thing ever on television. I understand she is a sensitive person, and I'm sensitive to criticism from people. But this had nothing to do with Missy as person. I'm not going to withdraw my criticism that her character is out of date, and, really from the way it is projected, her character of Missy Hyatt is an insult to me when I see the strides women have tried very hard to make. You can say, "Oh, that's just wrestling," but you don't see too many characters like her on television. Very few women are projected in that fashion anymore. I feel very strongly that wrestling needs to clean up its act as far as the way women are portrayed. I know the hard-cores disagree because they like to see some one expose themselves or get beat up, but the image of wrestling needs to be cleaned up whether the hard-cores like it or not. Missy just got furious by the yearbook story.

AM: I think it is so ironic that you have a 900-number with the kay fabe attitude **Bill Watts** has brought to WCW. With all his crackdowns on "exposing" the business, do you feel you'll be able to keep the slot?

SB: I don't know. I met Bill Watts in 1973 in a dressing room in Savannah, Ga., when he was booking the old Georgia circuit, and he was very cordial to me. I wasn't quite 20-years-old, but he was very cordial. Today, the man would not know me from **Adam**, except **Jim Ross** probably talked to him about *Matwatch* in the past. It's their company. Whatever money I get from that 900-number is not in our regular budget. It's always money that's set aside and is like money I don't see. It's been a nice additional nest egg. I don't get rich off it, but it's nice to have. It would not affect my weekly or monthly living if I did not have the money. I still do the number because it is fun. I like putting together 4-to-4 1/2 minutes a week of wrestling news and information. I'll be there as long as they want me. Certainly, that's their privilege.

But it comes back to the fact you have to have a life beyond wrestling. Nothing in wrestling is the cure-all or end-all as far as life is concerned. The fact I stated this did not make me the most popular guy in the world, and I probably lost a few subscribers at the end of *Matwatch*

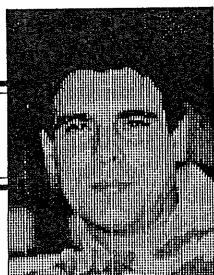
(Continued on Page 3)

Aguayo Calls for Conan's Help

Right off the bat, I'll give the July 5 show a thumbs up. Of all the AAA shows I've seen, this has to be the best one. There's a certain friend of mine who lives in Chicago with the initials **Steve Sims** who doesn't agree with me, but this was **Antonio Pena's** best effort yet. Maybe it was because the heels seemed to get away with murder or maybe because the started with a bang. Anyway, here's a review of the card:

1) **Winners-Super Calo-Galactico** (technicos) defeated **Teremoto-Hecatombe-Maligno** (rudos) in two of three falls. The rudos didn't even wait for the opening bell to attack the counter-

Carlos Rey



parts, totally destroying Winners and Calo, who I have never seen take this much punishment. And Galactico was punished even worse! Teremoto and Hecatombe teamed to pin Galactico, then Maligno joined the duo to make Calo submit. Winners was also rendered helpless by the trio. The rudos worked off Galactico in the second fall. When he made a tag, one referee saw it and the other didn't, so he was forced to remain in the ring. The referees started arguing, giving the rudos the chance to throw Galactico over the top rope. Referee **Pepe Casas** ordered Galactico be taken back to the dressing room, thus giving the rudos a one-man advantage. Just when it looked like the rudos would win the match, out came **Coliseo 2000** to even the teams. The technicos then came back, with Calo made Maligno submit with a version of the airplane spin, Winners pinned Hecatombe after a backward flip off the top rope and Coliseo made Teremoto submit to a *cavenaria* (a submission hold which works on the back and neck). The third fall saw Coliseo really make a showing for himself, which was the reason for the Galactico injury. The match ended when Winners and Calo did their signature flips over the top rope onto Teremoto and Hecatombe, leaving the rudos unable to get up, and Coliseo did a back flip onto Maligno for the pin.

2) Another technico victory as **Super Muneco-El Hijo del Santo-Fantasma** defeated **Blue Panther-Universo 2000-Cien Caras** in two of three falls. This had all the workings of a great match, except for Muneco, who I do not think much of. But considering the others, you could ignore Muneco. Well, at least he is very over with the fans to justify his push. This as my first look at Fantasma, and I believe his first AAA appearance, but I have heard a lot of good things about him. He does get great fan support. The rivalry between Panther and Santo was intense in this bout, but as always, Caras stole the show, working mostly against Fantasma. It is incredible how Caras can get the crowd in an uproar in just one or two moves. I guess this is why he is so valuable to any promotion that uses him. In the first fall, Muneco pinned Panther, Santo pinned Universo and Fantasma kept Caras from returning to the ring. The rudos gained control in the second fall, with Panther quickly shredding the mask of Santo. Caras pinned Fantasma, Universo made Muneco submit and Panther kept Santo out of the ring. The technicos were able to come back in the third fall, but here's where we get another screw-job finish. Santo has Panther in bad shape and just about has his mask ripped off. Finally, he rips it off,

which is an automatic disqualification. However, as Santo rips off the mask, Panther hits him in the groin. Both referees then awarded the match to Santo's team via disqualification. They are leading up to some sort of match between Panther and Santo, although I doubt it will be a mask vs. mask encounter. I don't think either of these two, especially Santo, will ever lose their mask.

3) The technicos take another as **Super Raton-Super Pinochio-Super Calo** defeated **Atilla-Bleda-El Magnate** in two of three falls. This is a match I would rather have not seen, but I am forced to report on it. I hate the Super Raton (**Mighty Mouse**) gimmick, as well as Pinochio's. I did like a line in this match, though, that commentator **Pedro Septien** said. He remarked that as his travels became more extensive in wrestling, he realized you could pick up a rock and out would spring luchadores, just like basketball players spring up in Chicago. Calo looked great, and Magnate was pretty good, too. Raton and Pinochio did not wrestle badly, but their costumes are awful. In the first fall, Pinochio pinned Bleda, Raton pinned Atilla and Calo chased Magnate from the ring. The rudos evened things in the second fall as Atilla and Bleda pinned Raton, Calo was forced to submit to a triple team and Atilla and Bleda forced Pinochio to submit. The third fall ended with Calo doing a *tope suicida* (flying leap over the top rope) onto Atilla, Pinochio jumped over the top rope onto Bleda and Raton pinned Magnate.

4) Before describing this match, I would just like to say how much I loved this match. I loved the beginning, middle, and, yes, finish. Everyone had been waiting for this grudge match -- **Perro Aguayo vs. Fishman** -- but no one expected this outcome. This match was a complete brawl, beginning in the first fall. But every time Aguayo would gain an advantage, referee **El Tirantes** would over-emphasize technico rules (i.e. physically restrain Aguayo during his offensive) so Fishman could regain control. Tirantes was very physical in this match, pulling Aguayo by the hair, etc. Aguayo had Fishman pinned many times, but Tirantes would count extremely slowly (even worse than **Ole Anderson**). It was ridiculous, with the final pinfall coming after Tirantes held his hand in the air for about thirty second before slapping the mat to count Fishman down. The second fall was more in the same, with both men bleeding heavily. Aguayo almost had Fishman's mask off when Fishman made a comeback by kicking Aguayo in the groin and covering him for the pin. Looking at the tape in slow motion, it was obvious Tirantes saw Fishman's foul, but he immediately turned his head away afterward and pretended he didn't. The third fall was even wilder, with Fishman about to lose his mask when suddenly Cien Caras came out and completely destroyed Aguayo with Fishman's help. The crowd was going wild and screaming for Santo, but to no avail. The duo continued to pound Aguayo, with Tirantes not doing anything. Finally, after Fishman refused to cover Aguayo, he called for a disqualification and raised Aguayo's hand. However, the rudos continued to pound Aguayo until Pena came out to stand over him. The fans were even getting involved at this point, throwing garbage at the rudos. At one point, a girl in the front row climbed under the ringside barricade and almost hit Fishman. Several fans climbed over the barrier and were assisting Aguayo back to the dressing room when he was interviewed. Aguayo began screaming for **Conan** to come back and help him, which was really hot. Thus, expect a tag-team match between those teams shortly.

Doc-Gordy win NWA Tag-Team Belts

(Continued from Page 5)

strap, but was still stunned myself. An interview was held with Vader and Race after the bout, which was a nice touch. Sting was helped from the ring by Simmons, Koloff and Ole Anderson after the bout, and was given a surprising round of applause. Great stuff. Grade: B+.

7) Williams-Gordy defeated Windham-Rhodes when Williams pinned Rhodes after a fantastic flying clothesline (Rhodes took a 360-degree bump). I wish the match was as exciting as the finish. More boredom, although Williams and Gordy have been quickly established as a dominating team. Uncle Ole is quite similar to former World Class Championship Wrestling official Bronco Lubich with his quiet, uneven counts and slow reactions. The Steiners came out at the onset, but were kept from the ring by Anderson and WCW security director Doug Dillinger. A post-match interview with Williams and Gordy was also given. Another nice touch, although I'm still not sure if Williams was speaking English. Grade: C-.

Notes: Overall, I give the show a 3.5 on a 10-point scale, making it the most disappointing WCW pay-per-view show I have ever seen. The Sting-Vader match was not enough to salvage extremely boring tag-team bouts that contained no flow. At least at last year's Bash, which was the worst WCW pay-per-view show in company history, there was suspense in watching the Lex Luger-Windham match and listening to the "We Want Flair" chants.

NEXT ISSUE: We will definitely return to the 12-page format next issue with a whole bunch of grappling news, including columns by **Carlos Rey** and **John Muse**, transcripts of the *Wrestle Talk* radio show featuring **Cheryl Vasquez** and a 15-year-old who says he was sexually molested by former WWF ring announcer **Mel Phillips** and more. An interview was already conducted with WCW executive vice president **Bill Watts**, and the transcript will appear in Issues 43 and 44. So, please make sure your subscriptions do not expire.

Two housekeeping notes. One, the publication date for the newsletter has been changed to every Friday. Two, **Paul Hanlin Jr.** is no longer a *Three Count* columnist. More on both topics next week.

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8850 S.W. 19th Street
Miami FL 33165